

AUDIT COMMISSION HOUSING SELF-ASSESSMENT

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: SOCIAL CARE AND STRATEGIC HOUSING

CABINET

23RD SEPTEMBER, 2004

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To receive the outcome of the regular performance assessment for the service block for housing.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision

Recommendation

THAT Cabinet note the report and the implications for delivery locally.

Reasons

To enable Cabinet to understand the range of the assessment areas and the challenges in relation to improving housing services in Herefordshire. This is also necessary because the housing assessment is directly related to the CPA performance assessment for the Council.

Considerations

1. It is important to note that the strategic housing self-assessment has been confirmed as assessed at four against the key themes contained within the report. This reaffirms the excellent rating for housing and Herefordshire Council. It should be acknowledged that this is particularly pleasing given that the strategic housing services had only been in place for 18 months at the time of the inspection.
2. The report identifies areas for improvement which present challenges in the period ahead. These are completing the housing strategy, the pressure of the provision for homelessness, producing improved customer information, completing the best value review of private sector housing and conducting a private sector stock condition survey.
3. Housing Strategy - work is well underway on the housing strategy including essential housing needs information which will inform the final strategy.
4. Bed and Breakfast - Strategic Housing, through the use of capital funding and Supporting People revenue funding, is developing additional temporary accommodation to enable the Council to cease the use of bed and breakfast accommodation, however, homelessness trends indicate a need for continued

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Sue Fiennes, Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing on 01432 260039

investment in this area.

5. Additionally the Council is currently negotiating on the commencement of a homeless to home floating support service in partnership with Shelter which aims to prevent reporting homelessness and support homeless families.
6. Customer Leaflets - the need to expand and improve a range of public leaflets is recognised and this work is underway.
7. Private Sector Best Value Review - the review is progressing and will be concluded during Spring 2005.
8. Private Sector Stock Condition - resources have been identified to undertake a private sector stock condition survey which will be commissioned in the new year with a view to commencement in April 2005.

Alternative Options

There are no alternative options

Risk Management

The development of these and other housing improvements is considered to be dependent on a range of resources including financial and every effort will be made to secure improvements wherever possible. This assessment means that the excellent score will remain effective for the purpose of CPA reporting.

Consultees

Staff, stakeholders and Strategic Housing Managers

Background Papers

Audit Commission - Regular Performance Assessment - Appendix 1